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The Liberty Question.

THE STRUGGLE FOR LIBERTY.

Liberty has ever been the watchword of heroes. The enjoyment of it has been looked upon as one of the most desirable attainments for which humanity can strive. To gain, retain, and enhance it, countless battles have been fought, blood has been poured out like water, lives have been freely given. The world's noblest and bravest and best have been its most ardent champions.

The foes of liberty are those who for greed or lust or ambition would enslave or oppress their fellow men. The great struggle of the ages has been a struggle to establish the gospel principle that no man should be allowed to wrong another. It has been an effort to establish such social and political conditions as will prevent and thwart the selfishness of would-be tyrants.

THE TRIUMPH OF LIBERTY.

True liberty then requires the restraint of those who for personal advantage would injure others. It sternly prohibits plunder, giving freedom to the honest citizen by taking away the power and opportunity of the assassin and the thief. Liberty is maintained by law that gives men fuller freedom in virtue and morality, by taking away the freedom some would fain have to be immoral and unjust.

THE ENEMIES OF LIBERTY.

Heartless avarice, chafing under the restraints that true liberty imposes upon it, often prates of "Liberty," as if the sacred word meant the unbridled tyranny of reckless selfishness. Genuine liberty never can mean permission for evil to overcome good. It means freedom for the right by suppression of the wrong.

If the liquor traffic embrutes men, destroys homes, blights lives, degrades character, breaks hearts, ruins bodies and damns souls; then in the name of liberty we must overthrow the liquor traffic and give fuller freedom to body, soul, heart, life and home. Rev. Father Walter Elliott, of New York, an earnest and eloquent Catholic priest, forcibly expresses this great truth in the following terms:—

LIBERTY is a dear word. And it is behind that good word, consecrated as it is by the memories of many a great struggle (for liberty is one of the things, that men worthy of the name die for), it is behind that good word that our enemies, the saloon-keepers, have entrenched themselves. Liberty? Personal liberty? What liberty do they claim?

LIBERTY OF THE HOME.

Is it the liberty of the man in the midst of his family? A man will die for his wife, his little ones, for their custody, for the right to train them, to live with them, to educate them and be to them husband and father. Why, it is from the door of the saloon that the bloodstained footsteps are tracked that lead down to the destruction of the family. The idea of the men who keep

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saloons claiming liberty—liberty to poison the family ; to breed in it dissensions, social warfare, the demon of the worst example ! They claim the liberty of the man—is that it ? The liberty of that man is worse than that of one who would unlock the cage of wild beasts in the menagerie and turn them loose upon the little ones of your family and of every family in the land.

LIBERTY OF THE CITIZEN.

Then, there is another liberty that men claim—the liberty of the citizen. That is a great liberty, too. Now, is there anything like that sentiment of real civil liberty in that which inspires the saloon-keepers and their servants in the Legislature and the town council, that they should array themselves in Personal Liberty leagues, or that they should appeal to the general public, through the press and upon the platform, to the music of such a great word as that ? *They are the deadliest venom that poisons politics.* It is from the doors of the saloon to the low caucus, and from the low caucus back to the saloon, that the footsteps are traced that mean the destruction of liberty ; for they mean the destruction of all civil dignity and of all the honor of citizenship. We know that. Perhaps we know better than we can be told that instead of their claiming any right of liberty because of citizenship, they are the ones who should be the the most hated—if one could hate a person because of his vice—by those who love liberty and love citizenship.

LIBERTY OF RELIGION.

There is just one other kind of liberty that men can claim—I believe it is the highest kind—and that is what is called "the liberty of religion." Of all truth that has rights and can claim liberty, religious truth stands first ; for the more a man is filled with religion—that is to say, the more he is possessed of those truths which spur on, and those methods which actuate the noblest impulses of his being, in his dealings with all ; and, that is what religion is—the more fond he is of liberty in the state, the more capable he is of exercising safely and profitably the liberty of the man ; for, after all, the end of religion is not simply restraint, the end of religion is not total abstinence, the end of temperance is not total abstinence ; total abstinence, temperance, all restraint is a means to an end, and the end of all religion is animation, progress, a movement upwards. It is a glimpse of the God-given power, that is within us, of possessing the divine. It is the impulse that leads us forward and onward ever. It is religion, union with God, elevation. So that true religion, or even religion that may be mixed with error, but which may have truth in it, in so far urges men on to liberty everywhere ; and the liberty of the citizen follows the liberty of the Christian.

The man who has not his mind is as much worse than the slave as is the brute. It is the brutalizing of the man, and hence the imposing upon him of the brutish fetters of slavery, that makes the slavery of drink ; and the slavery-making of the drunkard-maker is the most detestable, hateful and deadly that is known. Liberty? Liberty forever—the liberty of the man ; the liberty of the citizen ; the liberty of conscience ; the liberty of religion ; always, forever ; —more of it, in greater and deeper draughts, that liberty may enter into our very blood, that there may be less restraint upon the free limits of every man born in the image of God, but no liberty to do wrong, deadly wrong ; no liberty to make slaves; no liberty to poison liberty ; NO LIBERTY FOR THE LIQUOR TRAFFIC.

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